

# Cilly Cliffs Multiple Timber Sale Project Newsletter

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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Swan River State Forest's second newsletter for the proposed Cilly Cliffs Multiple Timber Sale Project. The purpose of this newsletter is to reiterate our project objectives, update you on project development since the first newsletter, summarize the alternatives that were developed by the interdisciplinary team (ID Team), and inform you of further opportunities to comment on the project.

## PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- Promote biodiversity by moving forest stands towards historic cover type conditions and species composition;
- improve forest health and productivity by addressing insect and disease issues;
- generate revenue to the Common School trust for funding K-12 public education and benefit local economies;
- contribute sufficient volume towards DNRC's annual sustained-yield target of 57.6 Million Board Feet (MMbf) as required by state law (77-5-221 through 223, MCA) while incorporating and meeting important ecological commitments;
- develop and improve the transportation system and infrastructure for long-term management, fire suppression, and public access;
- improve water quality by removing and rehabilitating sediment-point sources, and meet *Best Management Practices* (BMPs) on all project roads, including haul routes to Highway 83; and
- reduce fuel loads and wildfire hazards by decreasing ground and ladder fuel loads.

## Swan River State Forest

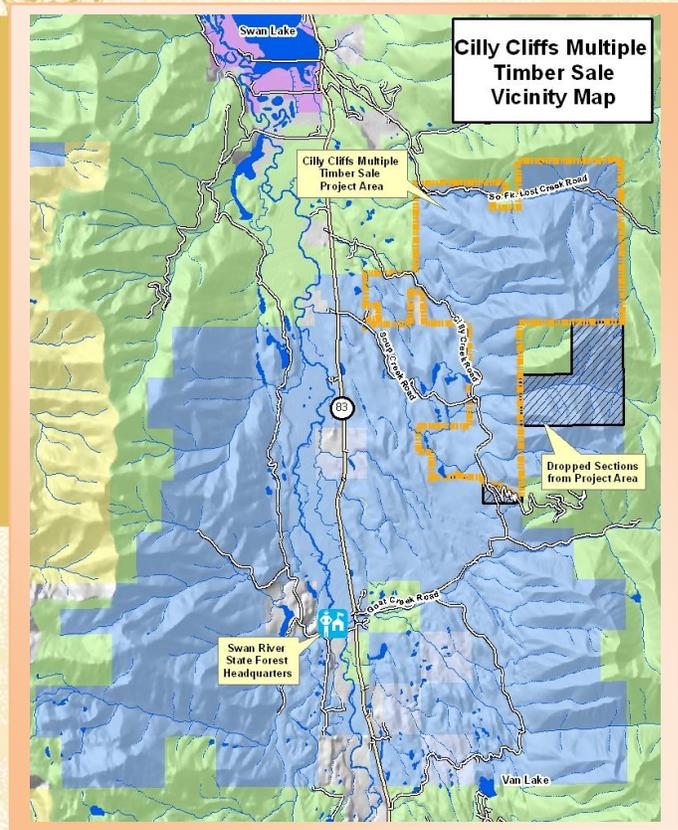
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## PROJECT CHANGES

The project area has been further refined since the first newsletter. The previous project area, which covered 12,555 acres, included the following sections: Section 3, Township 23 North, Range 17 West; and Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 33, and 34, Township 24 North, Range 17 West. Currently, the following sections have been removed from the project area after further review: Part of Section 3, Township 23 North, Range 17 West; and Sections 24, 25, and 26, Township 24 North, Range 17 West (the cross-hatched area in *THE VICINITY MAP*). This change has reduced the project area size down to approximately 10,503 acres.

### Project Timeline

The following dates display the Cilly Cliffs Multiple Timber Sale Project Timeline. Although the ID Team has specified particular times and methods for public input, public input is not limited to these times; the ID Team accepts comments throughout the development of the project.



### Cilly Cliffs Multiple Timber Sale Project Timeline

- Alternative Development Finalized – December 2013
- Environmental Analysis and writing Draft EIS – December 2013 thru March 2014
- Draft EIS Internal Review – March 2014 thru May 2014
- Draft EIS Public Review – June 2014
- Final EIS Published – Summer 2014
- Record of Decision – Fall 2014
- Project divided into multiple timber sales and harvested over several years – 2015 thru 2020

### Where Are We Now?

At this stage in developing the project, the ID Team has developed draft alternatives and is completing field review of the potential stands that would be treated under each alternative as well as the associated transportation system to access those stands. Specialists on the ID Team conduct field reviews relative to their specific discipline in order to gain an understanding of the existing conditions as well as the potential environmental impacts of the proposed treatments and associated road work. Specialists also provide mitigation measures to the project leader to minimize effects on various resources. Once field review is complete, the ID Team will transition into the writing of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

## ALTERNATIVES

Each alternative must comply with the *State Forest Land Management Plan (SFLMP)* and *Administrative Rules for Forest Management*.

Each alternative, including No-Action Alternative A, must be a viable option for the Decisionmaker. After carefully reviewing the concerns and issues that were received during the scoping of the project, the ID Team developed 3 alternatives. Each description highlights the major differences between the alternatives.

- ***No-Action Alternative A***

Timber harvesting and other activities associated with the proposed project would not occur.

- ***Action Alternative B***

As compared to Action Alternative C, this alternative would treat less old-growth stands, would use more old-growth maintenance/restoration treatments where old-growth stands are treated, would require more new road construction, and would use more uneven-aged management treatments (such as single tree and group selection).

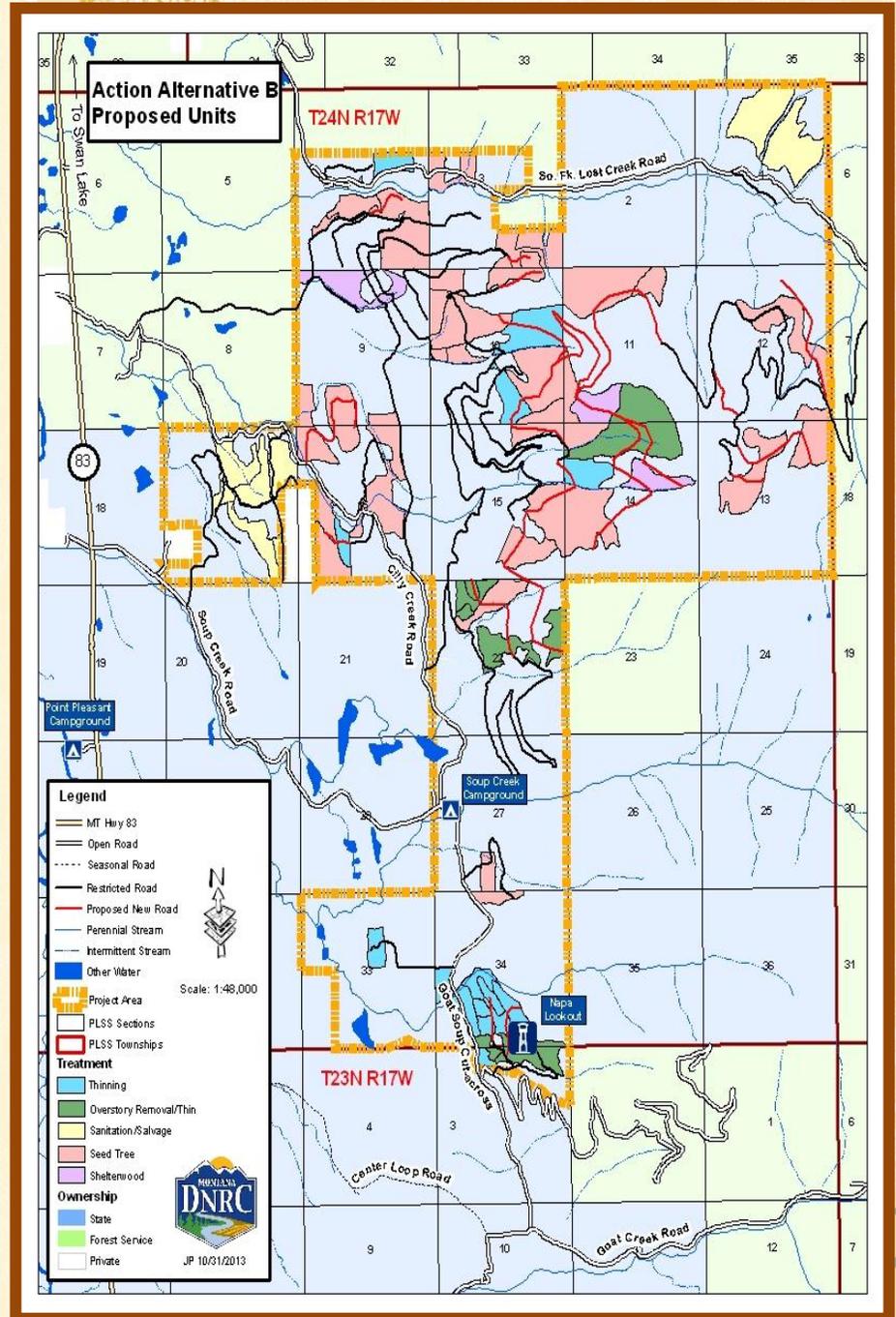
**Under this action alternative, the following activities would be expected to occur:**

- Approximately 21.6 MMBf would be harvested on an estimated 2,375 acres.
- Even-aged management treatments (such as seed tree, shelterwood, or commercial thin of even-aged stands) would occur on approximately 1,477 acres.
- Uneven-aged treatments (such as single tree selection and group selection) would occur on approximately 566 acres.
- Sanitation or salvage treatments (treatments where only dead, dying, and diseased infected trees are harvested) would occur on approximately 332 acres.
- Approximately 550 acres of old-growth acres would be treated and would no longer be old growth as defined in *DNRC's Forest Management Rules (ARM 36.11.403[48])*.
- Approximately 156 acres of old growth would be treated with an old-growth maintenance or old-growth restoration treatment and would remain old growth as defined in *ARM 36.11.403 (49) and (51)*.
- Roughly 1,430 acres of high or very high risk of insect and disease infestation would be treated.
- Approximately 14 miles of new permanent road would be constructed in order to access harvest units.

## ALTERNATIVES

- Skyline harvesting systems (including conventional cable yarding and excaline) would be utilized on approximately 1,235 acres.
- Ground-based harvesting systems (such as feller-bunchers, harvesters, rubber-tired or tracked skidders, and forwarders) would be utilized on approximately 950 acres.
- Helicopter harvesting systems would be utilized on approximately 190 acres.
- Cilly Creek water yield will increase from low risk to moderate risk (level of risk associated with channel stability due to an increase in run-off and in-stream flows following harvest).

*The proposed stands, treatments, and road locations highlighted on the map may change as project development continues.*



## ALTERNATIVES

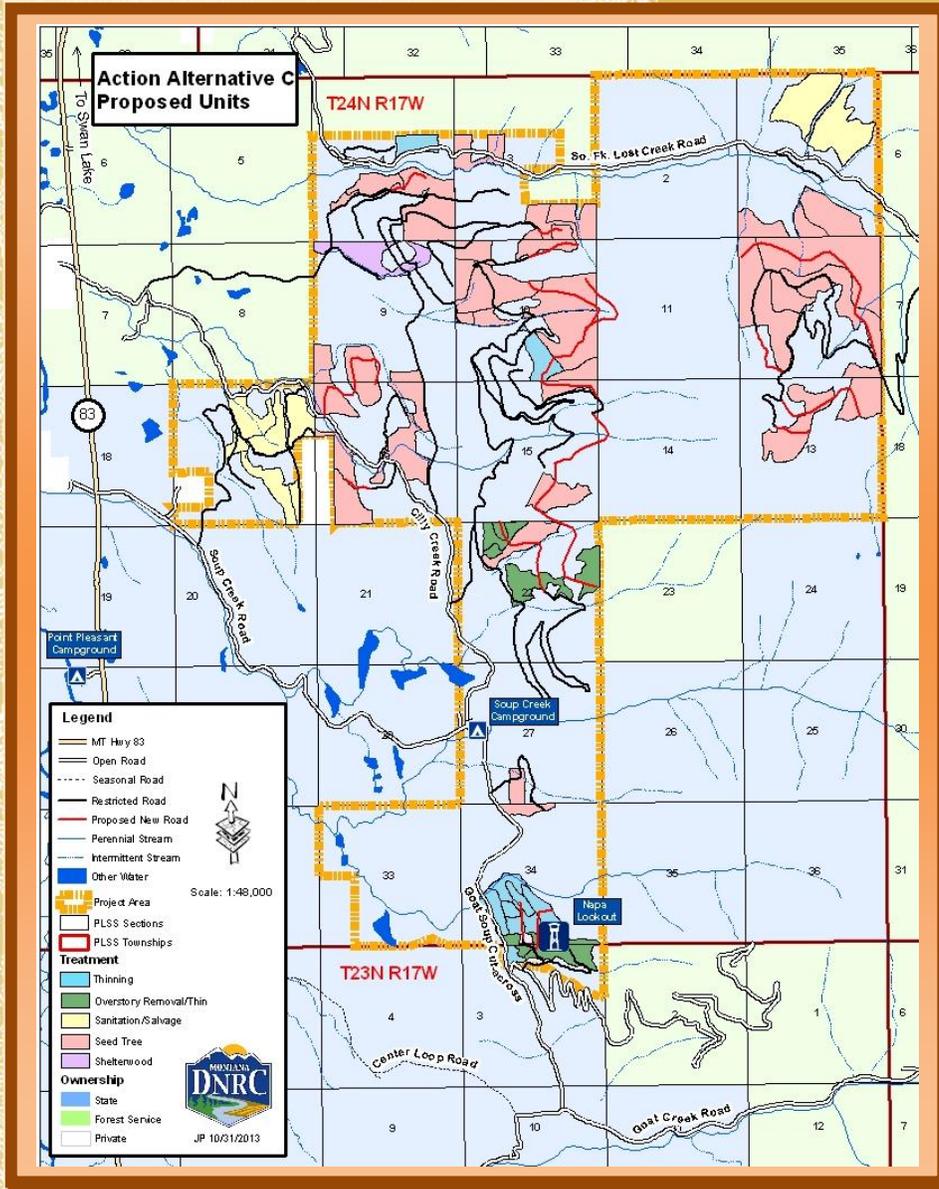
### • **Action Alternative C**

As compared to Action Alternative B, this alternative would treat more old-growth stands, would use less old-growth maintenance/restoration treatments, would require less new road construction, and would use more even-aged management treatments.

**Under this action alternative, the following activities would be expected to occur:**

- Approximately 21.7 MMbf would be harvested on an estimated 2,161 acres.
  - Even-aged management treatments (such as seed tree, shelterwood, or commercial thin of even-aged stands) would occur on approximately 1,614 acres.
  - Uneven-aged treatments (such as single tree selection and group selection) would occur on approximately 215 acres.
  - Sanitation or salvage treatments (treatments where only dead, dying, and diseased infected trees are harvested) would occur on approximately 332 acres.
  - Approximately 865 acres of old growth would be treated and would no longer be old growth as defined in *DNRC's Forest Management Rules (ARM 36.11.403[48])*.
- Approximately 33 acres of old-growth acres would be treated with an old-growth maintenance or old-growth restoration treatment and would remain old growth as defined in *ARM 36.11.403 (49) and (51)*.
  - Roughly 1,748 acres of high or very high risk of insect and disease infestation would be treated.
  - Approximately 10 miles of new permanent road would be constructed in order to access harvest units.
  - Skyline harvesting systems (including conventional cable yarding and excaline) would be utilized on approximately 977 acres.
  - Ground-based harvesting systems (such as feller-bunchers, harvesters, rubber-tired or tracked skidders, and forwarders) would be utilized on approximately 994 acres.
  - Helicopter harvesting systems would be utilized on approximately 190 acres.
  - Cilly Creek water yield will remain in low risk (level of risk associated with channel stability due to an increase in run-off and in-stream flows following harvest).

# ALTERNATIVES

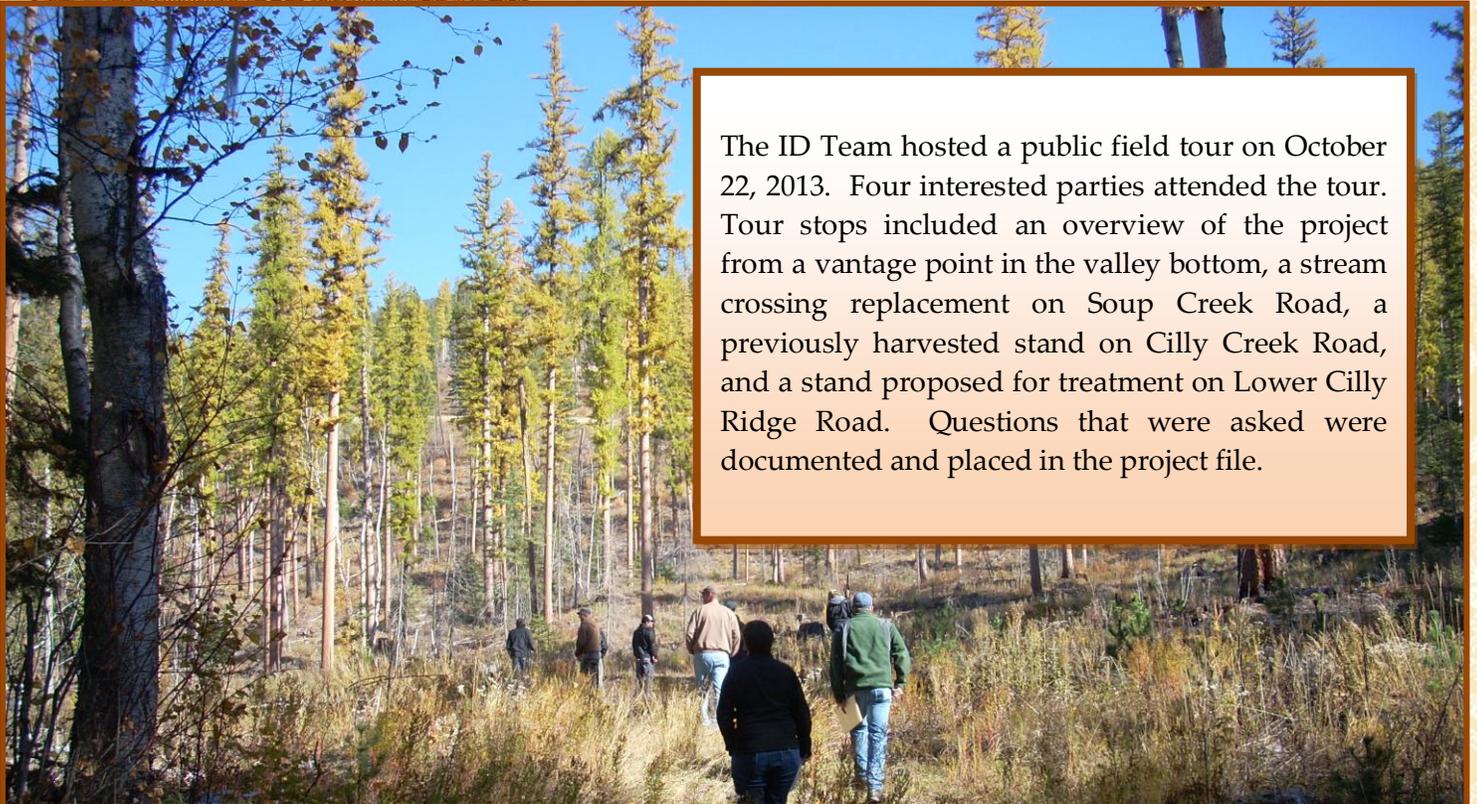


Did you know..... A board foot (bf) is a board of lumber that measures 12 inches wide by 12 inches long by 1 inch thick?

Mbf is an acronym for one thousand board feet; MMbf is an acronym for one million board feet. A truck load of logs carries about 4.5 Mbf.

The proposed stands, treatments, and road locations highlighted on the map may change as project development continues.

## FIELD TOUR



The ID Team hosted a public field tour on October 22, 2013. Four interested parties attended the tour. Tour stops included an overview of the project from a vantage point in the valley bottom, a stream crossing replacement on Soup Creek Road, a previously harvested stand on Cilly Creek Road, and a stand proposed for treatment on Lower Cilly Ridge Road. Questions that were asked were documented and placed in the project file.



### Contact Information

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## Cilly Cliffs Multiple Timber Sale

### Opportunities for Public Input

There is still time to comment on this project; however, project development is winding down and will soon be transitioning to writing the DEIS. If you wish to participate, the following opportunities should be considered:

- If you did not comment during the initial scoping period and have issues or concerns regarding the Cilly Cliffs Multiple Timber Sale Project, direct your comments to *Contact Information* below.
- If you would like future mailings regarding this project and have not previously contacted us, send your name, mailing address, and a request to be included on the mailing list to *Contact Information* below.

### What's to Come....

- **DEIS** – The ID Team anticipates that the DEIS will be available for public review in June of 2014. During this time, interested individuals will have 30 days to review and submit comments on the DEIS.

STATE OF MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION



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